GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:187
ANSWERED ON:08.03.2000
FACILITIES TO HAJ PILGRIMS
AVTAR SINGH BHADANA;CHANDRESH PATEL KORDIA

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Central Haj Committee (CHC) has been accused of providing deficient services to thousands of Haj pilgrims who pay crores of rupees to the Committee;

(b) if so, the details of facilities which are being provided to Haj pilgrims;

(c) whether the Government have decided to increase the number of Haj pilgrims from this year;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether the Government have also increased the subsidy for individual Haj pilgrim;

(f) if so, the details thereof; and (g) the total expenditure likely to be incurred thereon?

Answer

THE MINISTER FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI JASWANT SINGH)

(a) The government have seen the press reports about the difficulties faced by some of the Haj pilgrims.

(b) Details are enclosed.

(c) & (d) With the efforts of the Government, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has agreed to increase the quota of Indian pilgrims for Haj from this year onwards from 91000 to 120000.

(e), (f) & (g) For Haj 2000, the Government have decided that the pilgrims, who go through the auspices of Central Haj Committee, should pay the same airfare which they had been paying in earlier years and that Government will defray the difference between actual airfare charged by the Air Charter Company and the fare paid by the pilgrim. As the Government have decided to increase the number of Central Haj Committee pilgrims from 66,000 to 72,000 and the cost of chartering have gone up, the amount defrayed by the Government has consequently increased. It is estimated that the total amount to be defrayed by the Government would be approximately Rs.137 crores this year.

Statement in respect of part (b) of Lok Sabha Starred Question Dy. No. 187 to be answered on 8.3.2000

The following facilities are provided to the Haj pilgrims by the Government, the Central Haj Committee and the various State Haj Committees:

a) Distribution of application forms, collection of requisite amount and preparation of Pilgrim`s Pass (special travel document) and facilitation in having Haj visa affixed.
b) Distribution of a booklet for guidance of the Haj pilgrims.
c) Deputation of staff at embarkation and disembarkation points to facilitate the pilgrims.
d) Deputation of Khuddam-ul-Hujjaj, doctors, nurses, para-medical staff, dispatch of medicines, looking after the welfare of pilgrims. Administrative staff is also sent to assist in the arrangements.
e) Setting up medical dispensaries in Makkah and Madinah.
f) Arrangement of accommodation, transport and tents in Makkah and Madinah.
g) Organising the services of Moallims (Religious Guides)
h) Orientation and training programmes for trainers who, in turn, impart training to Haj pilgrims all over the country.
i) Participation in the finalisation of the Haj Charter Agreement.